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ABSTRACT

Education in the State of Qatar was traditionally limited to the "orthography of the Arabic language." In 1952 Qatar had one elementary school for boys with 240 pupils and 6 teachers. By 1955, an elementary school for girls (n=50) was established. In 1980-81, schooling increased to 71 schools for boys with 20,588 students and 70 schools for girls with 19,356 students. Qatar established its academic system with 6 years for primary education, 3 for preparatory (Junior High), and 3 for secondary. At present, the university is limited to undergraduate studies. Specialization in science, mathematics, or literature starts by the second year in the secondary education level. The educational system also contains an Institute of Religious Studies and vocational schools (both limited to boys). Most students study academics leading to a university degree. Few students are interested in vocational education, a trend which makes Qatar dependent upon foreign labor. Education is free at all levels and many services are provided free to the students (Qatar has the highest per capita expenditure in education in the world--\$1,990). Teacher preparation, student attrition, and grade repetition due to subject failure of the one time final examinations are educational problems. (PN)

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EDUCATION IN QATAR

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Paper presented at the 1983 Annual Meeting of the
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Montreal, Canada

I. Introduction

Before one would describe a system of education and discuss its role in a given culture, a background of the culture and the society should be introduced.

This paper is concerned with education in the State of Qatar. A peninsula situated on the west coast of the Arabian Gulf (commonly known in the West as the Persian Gulf). Bahrain is to its north, the United Arab Emirates to the south and Saudi Arabia to its west. If one would count for the peninsula by itself, it is about 11,300 square kilometers. But counting for the islands that belong to the state, the area totals 11,480 square kilometers.

Qatar, is one of the OPEC countries. At the same time discovered natural gas might prove to be the world's most prolific gas field. Estimates range between 40,000 and 60,000 billion cubic feet. According to official numbers, Qatar has about 250,000 inhabitants.

The discoveries of oil and gas, led the country to be in active touch with other cultures.

II. Education

For a long time, education in Qatar received little attention. Qatar was a British protectrate and the ruling class by that time felt that there was no need for schools or schooling even for their own children. The rulers believed that observation by their children would be enough for them to learn the art of ruling. A cultural matter, as described by Al Rumaihi (1975) was that the community did not easily accept that a person from a humble background would, by virtue of his education, become the social equal of the traditional elite. Therefore education in Qatar, like many other countries in the region, was mainly limited to the "Kuttab." Traditionally, the kuttab was the school through which the pupil could learn the "orthography of the Arabic language." The word kuttab is derived from the Arabic verb kataba which means "he wrote." (Saif 1959) Learning in the kuttab was based on the faultless memorization of the Quran (the Holy Book for Muslims). In addition, the rudiments of arithmetic and writing were also taught. Usually these kuttabs were attached to the mosques and the sheikh (the mulla) was the person in charge of instruction.

In 1952 Qatar had one elementary school for boys with 240 pupils and six (6) teachers. By 1955, an elementary school for girls was established with 50 girls as its total population. Since that time, schooling in Qatar leapt to 71 schools for boys with 20,588 students and 70 schools for girls with 19,356 students. This is according to the 1980/1981 Ministry of Education Annual Report.

Table 1 is a survey of the numbers of schools, classrooms, students, and teachers during 1980/1981.

Table 1
General Summary of Number of Schools, Classroom,
Students, and Teachers in Qatar in the Academic Years 1980-1981

The Stage	Sex	Number of Schools	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Mean of Students Per Class	Mean of Students Per Teacher	Mean of Students Per School
Primary	Boys	44	477	13062	840	27	14	297
	Girls	44	455	12204	1084	27	12	277
	Total	88	932	25266	1924	27	13	287
General Preparatory	Boys	14	141	4518	445	32	10	323
	Girls	17	146	4480	512	31	9	264
	Total	31	287	8998	957	31	9	290
General Secondary	Boys	10	92	2568	235	28	11	257
	Girls	9	99	2672	286	27	10	297
	Total	19	191	5240	521	28	10	276
School of Commerce	Boys	1	3	59	19	20	3	59
Religious School	Boys	1	12	325	42	27	8	325
Trade School	Boys	1	3	56	25	19	2	56
Total	Boys	71	728	20588	1606	28	13	290
	Girls	70	700	19356	1882	28	10	277
	Total	141	1428	39944	3488	28	11	283

III. The Educational Ladder*

Similar to many other countries around the world, Qatar established its academic educational ladder with six years for primary education, three for preparatory (Junior High), and three for secondary. Until present time, the university is limited to undergraduate studies. One can notice that specialization in science and mathematics or literature starts by the second year in the secondary education level (equivalent to the 11th grade in the American system).

The two other branches in that ladder are:

1. Religious Institute: The student can join the Institute of Religious Studies upon completing the sixth grade in the primary school. It should be noted that this type of school is limited to boys. The student has an equivalent opportunity in pursuing his studies for three years as preparatory and three years as secondary and then to the university.
2. Vocational Schools: Again, the population of these two types is limited to boys. Upon finishing the preparatory school, the student joins either the Industrial School or the Commercial School for three years. The student can go for higher education beyond that stage.

*Figure 1 shows the educational ladder.

Figure 1



IV. Vocational Education

Most Qatari students lean towards the academic ladder of education which leads to a university degree. Until now, this was the safest way to secure a position in any of the governmental offices. Few students are interested in vocational education. This trend makes Qatar dependent upon foreign labor. No official figures are available at this time to determine the percentage of the foreign labor force. Yet, it could be easily estimated at 80% +.

Realizing this fact, the Ministry of Education in Qatar established an industrial school since 1964/1965. Table 2 shows the number of students in the preparatory and the secondary levels together from 1966 - 1976.

TABLE 2:

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUMBER OF PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY

Academic Year	Preparatory				Secondary				Total Number
	Stage			Total	Stage			Total	
	1st	2nd	3rd			1st	2nd		3rd
1964/65	67	27	14	108	14	—	—	14	122
1965/66	76	48	24	148	10	11	--	21	169
1966/67	78	53	37	168	23	7	9	39	207
1967/68	66	37	44	147	29	18	7	54	201
1968/69	53	29	34	116	32	24	17	73	189
1969/70	47	28	24	99	17	29	25	71	170
1970/71	27	35	22	84	14	19	26	59	143
1971/72	37	22	33	92	18	12	22	52	144
1972/73	17	19	23	59	22	15	12	49	108
1973/74	26	15	16	57	12	13	13	38	95
1974/75	26	20	13	59	17	11	18	46	105
1975/76	--	24	19	43	15	12	12	39	82

The educational ladder as well as the information reported in the Ministry of Education Report (1980-1981, p. 100) shows that there are no more commercial or industrial schools at the level of the preparatory schools and they are limited to the secondary level. According to the official report, the total number of students in the secondary industrial school is 56 and that of the commercial school is 59.

Similar to many developing countries, vocational education refer to a lower social status. In addition, opportunities in front of the Qatari youth to work as a civil servant are wide open. But a major reason is that the country has enough money to hire expatriots to do the manual jobs. Kamal (1975) gave four suggested points which are:

1. [The schools] should have a variety of educational programs and extend vocational schools.
2. There should be basic classes in vocational education in every preparatory and secondary school to give the student some idea about vocational education.
3. [The government] should give more money to graduates of these schools or at least make it equal to that given [to graduates of] other schools.
4. [The government] should allow graduates from vocational schools to continue their study at the university level.

Education in Qatar is free at all levels from primary¹ school to university. In addition to free education, the Ministry of Education also provides the following free services:

1. An adequate supply of books and paper.
2. Transport from home to school and back and transportation for field trips, sports, and scout events.
3. Clothing and equipment for sports and scout activities.
4. Salaries of between 200 and 400 Riyals (U.S. dollar is equal to 3.64 Qatari Riyals) per month for students in the Teachers College, the trade school and the religious and commercial institutes, and salaries of 500 to 650 Riyals for students at the Colleges of Education.
5. Accommodation for students from the villages who are studying in Doha.
6. Free medical treatment in Qatar and abroad if necessary.
7. Scholarships for university education abroad (Qatar Year Book, p. 39).

* * * * *

It should be noted that one of the striking points is that Qatar has the highest per capita in education in the whole world (\$1,990) (The New York Times, September 20, 1981). This shows how the country values education. However, if one would calculate the expenditure per student rather than per capita in the same year (1978) Qatar spends an average of \$3,969.20 per student. In 1980 it became \$5,837.60, then dropped in 1981 to \$5,560.98. Students who chose to go to the science section would

1. "Primary" is a closer translation than "elementary" in the Arabic language to describe the first stage of formal education.

receive equivalent to \$137.40 per month for the second year of the secondary school (11th grade) and \$151.00 during the third year (12th grade). This act was enforced when the Ministry of Education found most students were enrolling in the literary section rather than science. The country needed more people in areas of mathematics and science. If any student is found in need of financial help, he/she would receive an amount between \$41.20 and \$68.70 per month for the twelve months of the year.

V. Problems

With such a high amount of expenditure per student, one may think there should not be a problem. Yet, the student of education for that area of the world, finds that the problems facing Qatar are similar to those in the surrounding countries regardless of the wealth. It started with poorer countries such as Egypt and copied by other countries.

Teacher Preparation

A major problem is the preparation of teachers especially for the primary school level. With the expansion of education and the need for teachers, some countries could not find qualified teachers (individuals who received pre service training), therefore, graduates of secondary schools or trade schools were accepted as teachers. Some other countries find that this is a cheaper way to pay for a "warm body" that can stand in front of the students. Table 3 shows that with the exception of female teachers at preparatory level (J.H.), the non-qualified teachers exceed in numbers those who had been prepared as teachers.

Table 3

Distribution of Teachers by Sex, Level and Qualifications
1980/1981*

Sex	Level	Qualified	%	Non-Qualified	%
Male	Primary	336	47	444	53
	Preparatory	198	42	270	58
	Secondary	117	39	181	61
Female	Primary	486	44	598	56
	Preparatory	257	50	255	50
	Secondary	137	47	149	53

* Ministry of Education, Annual Statistics, 1980-1981.

TABLE 4

Comparison between Qatari and non-Qatari teachers,
by level of school, number, percentage and sex,
at three different periods of time

Level of School	1969/70		1974/75		1980/81	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary teachers						
(1) Male : Qatari	81	21	190	38	166	20
: Non-Qatari	303	79	317	62	574	80
(2) Female : Qatari	22	7	227	41	699	64
: Non-Qatari	284	93	334	59	385	36
TOTAL	690		1,068		1,824	
Preparatory teachers						
(1) Male : Qatari	1	1	16	8	30	7
: Non-Qatari	73	99	175	92	438	93
(2) Female : Qatari	1	2	7	4	157	31
: Non-Qatari	45	98	180	96	355	61
TOTAL	120		373		980	
Seconday teachers						
(1) Male : Qatari	1	3	3	3	9	3
: Non-Qatari	39	97	97	97	289	97
(2) Female : Qatari	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	47	16
: Non-Qatari	29	100	40	100	239	84
TOTAL	69		140		584	

Source: Ministry of Education, Qatar. Annual Report(s), 1969/70, p. 143; 1974/75, p. 145; 1980/81, p. 47

Qataris vs. Non-Qatari

Because Qatar has a smaller population and because its system of education is about 30 years old, the number of non-Qatari teachers is higher than the Qataris. The only exception is that on the primary level among females where Qatari teachers form 64% and non-Qatari teachers 36%.

If we would accept that the status quo of an elementary school teacher is below that of the secondary school, why is it that there are less Qatari male teachers than non-Qataris? Table 3 shows these numbers. Teaching salaries are usually less than those in other governmental positions. Males who finish the secondary school have the option of going abroad for further studies in the areas not available locally. Many of them opt to leave for higher education in the States or in Europe, since the government is paying for their education.

Drop-outs and Repeating Grades. Since education in Qatar is not compulsory, it is easier for anyone to have a child drop-out of school. Dropping out could be due to any of many factors. Such as:

1. A business man who wants his son to help in the business. This could happen in any of the free trade societies.
2. A rich person who would take his son out of school for business trips (sometimes recreational).

This particular type (the 2nd) is causing educators in Qatar some concern. They describe such action as lack of motivation for education.

The other problem is when a child does not pass the final test and is asked to repeat the same grade. This, in itself, could lead to a drop-out. Unfortunately, statistics on drop-outs and/or repeaters are not available at this time.

Examinations. Unfortunately, Qatar adopted the system of examinations that makes the final test is the only one to count, i.e., if a student has been doing well all year but for one reason or another failed one subject on the final, he/she has to repeat all the subjects during the next year.

VI. Promises

Not only is the intention of this paper to show problems, but also promises.

This first promising sign is that the Qataris know that they have problems.

The second is that Qatar built a university that started in 1973 with the colleges of education, one for males and the other for females. Since that time, the university today includes other colleges: science, humanities, Islamic Law, and the most recent one is the college of engineering. In 1980/1981 the various colleges had 2,673 students: 1,735 males and 938 females. Other than the 1,648, there are 87 students represent 32 nationalities. The whole country is taking pride in its university and the government is not holding back needed funds.

A third promise is that Qatar, realizing that there is more to be gained from industrial countries, it sent missions to other countries. There are 1,305 Qatari outside Qatar for these studies either as undergraduates or graduates.

By 1980-1981 there were 634 students in the United States as follows:

Males	M.A.	Ph D.	Undergraduate	Special Training
	57	10	514	18
Females	9	-	26	-

The last, but not least, is the attitude of people towards education. The enthusiasm of people and the diligent work of the students show the eagerness of Qatar to move quickly on par with any other country.

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Appendix A

Trends in the Growth of the Budget
for Education in Qatar
(1953-1981)

Growth of the Education Budget, 1953-1981 in QRs*

School Year	Current Expenditures	Capital Expenditures	Total	Average Cost Per Student
1953	128,692		128,692	274
1957	3,898,857	2,537,143	6,436,000	2,763
1960	15,707,929	10,173,500	25,881,429	4,339
1963	22,886,082	3,173,000	26,059,082	2,736
1967	29,081,444	2,275,372	31,393,806	2,190
1970	41,528,950	3,300,000	44,828,950	2,419
1973	80,078,024	14,690,000	94,768,024	2,720
1974	87,738,564	21,190,000	108,928,564	3,917
1975	145,488,212	50,000,000	195,488,212	3,917
1976	211,806,230	60,000,000	271,806,230	8,392
1977	283,543,400	106,400,000	389,943,400	12,040
1978	338,849,400	150,221,100	489,070,500	14,430
1979	384,505,000	162,283,400	546,788,400	15,333
1980	525,696,516	274,371,000	800,067,516	21,249
1981	642,307,000	166,250,000	808,557,000	20,242

*One U.S. dollar = 3.64 Qatari Riyals.

Source: Ministry of Education, Annual Reports 1963/64 and 1980/81, p. 234.

Appendix B

Spending Priorities Among Countries

Source: The New York Times. September 20, 1981.

THE WORLD'S SPENDING PRIORITIES

1978 per capita expenditures (in U.S. dollars)

The United Nations has been trying to begin a "global negotiation" aimed at shifting billions of dollars from the industrialized world to the developing nations. A perennial theme in the debate — the amount of resources expended on arms — was underlined last week by Rudiger von Wechmar, outgoing president of the General Assembly.

"We are witnessing — almost helplessly — an acceleration of the arms race," he said. "This year, nearly \$500 billion are earmarked for sophisticated weapons and military hardware." An increase in official development assistance equivalent to only 5 percent of that figure, he said, would be enough to meet United Nations targets "to help those millions of human beings who still live in want and poverty."

How governments allocate resources for military and social programs is shown in the table below, which covers 140 countries with more than 99 percent of the global population. The data are the latest available and are taken from the forthcoming edition of "World Military and Social Expenditures" published by World Priorities.

Note: — = none or negligible; n.a. = not available

North America	Military	Education	Health	Europe	Military	Education	Health
United States	499	565	341	Albania	60	31	17
Canada	174	688	469	Austria	93	438	376
				Belgium	322	589	399
Latin America				Britain	262	297	268
Argentina	55	54	11	Bulgaria	77	120	65
Barbados	4	158	70	Czechoslovakia	143	144	137
Bolivia	18	32	8	Denmark	259	752	806
Brazil	18	55	27	Finland	102	489	318
Chile	73	50	34	France	50	512	546
Colombia	7	20	11	Germany, East	218	226	113
Costa Rica	11	99	19	Germany, West	350	491	591
Cuba	43	82	41	Greece	220	74	98
Dominican Rep.	17	18	12	Hungary	79	142	93
Ecuador	22	35	9	Iceland	—	397	545
El Salvador	13	23	9	Ireland	59	232	220
Guatemala	9	14	7	Italy	112	215	211
Guyana	10	46	15	Luxembourg	103	698	103
Haiti	2	2	1	Malta	24	74	74
Honduras	11	18	10	Netherlands	304	730	560
Jamaica	9	79	34	Norway	322	729	633
Mexico	8	68	10	Poland	99	101	113
Nicaragua	28	24	13	Portugal	64	73	63
Panama	9	65	60	Rumania	56	103	70
Paraguay	13	13	3	Spain	67	86	116
Peru	33	17	6	Sweden	365	927	883
Trinidad & Tobago	11	140	63	Switzerland	280	710	486
Uruguay	40	32	20	Turkey	64	44	10
Venezuela	44	149	83	Soviet Union	394	189	82
				Yugoslavia	105	136	100

Note: — = none or negligible; n.a. = not available

Asia	Military	Education	Health	Africa	Military	Education	Health
Afghanistan	5	3	1	Algeria	36	115	18
Australia	207	524	325	Angola	—	15	7
Bahrain	141	181	141	Benin	3	11	3
Bangladesh	1	2	0.3	Botswana	22	48	15
Brunei	642	239	n.a.	Burundi	5	4	1
Burma	5	2	1	Cameroon	7	13	4
China	26	15	6	Cent. African Rep.	4	8	3
Cyprus	39	75	32	Chad	8	3	2
Fiji	12	82	33	Congo	23	45	10
India	5	5	2	Egypt	91	28	9
Indonesia	11	6	5	Equatorial Guinea	25	10	4
Iran	261	115	31	Ethiopia	5	3	1
Iraq	159	70	11	Gabon	78	100	48
Israel	839	303	114	Gambia	—	11	7
Japan	80	489	389	Ghana	5	16	7
Jordan	87	31	10	Guinea	4	9	3
Korea, North	63	26	3	Ivory Coast	11	64	14
Korea, South	75	32	3	Kenya	12	17	6
Kuwait	613	454	287	Lesotho	—	10	3
Laos	10	2	1	Liberia	5	28	11
Lebanon	58	n.a.	n.a.	Libya	156	387	80
Malaysia	45	71	20	Madagascar	6	13	4
Mongolia	76	51	10	Malawi	4	5	2
Nepal	1	2	0.8	Mali	4	5	1
New Zealand	93	311	267	Mauritania	30	16	5
Oman	914	94	57	Mauritius	2	64	26
Pakistan	12	5	1	Morocco	42	41	8
Papua New Guinea	9	42	17	Mozambique	9	3	2
Philippines	11	11	4	Niger	2	3	2
Qatar	1,194	1,990	333	Nigeria	28	34	4
Saudi Arabia	1,004	507	137	Rwanda	3	4	1
Singapore	186	84	57	Senegal	10	12	4
Sri Lanka	1	5	3	Sierra Leone	2	9	4
Syria	147	55	4	Somalia	12	7	3
Taiwan	106	55	35	South Africa	80	67	6
Thailand	18	17	3	Sudan	14	4	3
U. Arab Emirates	836	277	250	Swaziland	2	38	11
Vietnam	18	4	1	Tanzania	10	12	5
Yemen, Arab Rep	52	10	4	Togo	8	21	7
Yemen, People's Dem. Rep	43	13	5	Tunisia	30	58	24
				Uganda	11	10	4
				Upper Volta	4	4	1
				Zaire	10	6	3
				Zambia	41	24	12
				Zimbabwe	31	19	9